

Refugees Not Welcome. The Populist Radical Right in Poland and the Migration Crisis

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Introduction

Despite being a beneficiary of European funds with a high level of public support for European integration, Poland is reluctant to accept some EU policies and proposals for joint actions. One example of this might be its contestation of the possible creation of a common European Union (EU) migration policy, as well as opposition to mandatory quotas in the refugee relocation programme proposed by the EU in 2016. It seems that the rise of populism and Euroscepticism is fuelling anti-European stances, bringing xenophobic discourse into the mainstream of politics and strengthening anti-immigration rhetoric. It is possible for this to happen as the Europeanisation process in Poland is far from complete, and discontent with the transformation and liberal order is overlapping with disappointment with politics in general.

In this paper I will present a general background of Poland–EU relations regarding relocation of refugees and the proposal of joint actions in the area of common migration policy, as well as the arguments of the radical-right parties that contest these solutions. The first part of the paper will be devoted to the concept of populist radical right (PRR) and the parties in the Polish political arena that can be seen as part of the PRR family. In the second part I will analyse *the way* populist radical-right parties in Poland are using the migration crisis in order to present their views on the future of Europe and mobilise the electorate. Two parties and their rhetoric will be examined. The first one is the Congress of the New Right (*Kongres Nowej Prawicy* – KNP), which won four seats in the European Parliament elections of 2014 and is the only openly Euro-reject party in Poland, to use the classification proposed by Kopecký and Mudde.¹ *The second grouping presented is*

¹ Petr Kopecký and Cas Mudde, “Explaining Different Paths of Democratization: The Czech and Slovak Republics”, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 16/3 (2002): 63–84.

Kukiz'15, which gained 8.81% of votes in the 2015 parliamentary election (cooperating with the far-right National Movement). The party claims that Islam is a danger to the cultural (Catholic) Polish identity, and calls asylum seekers "culturally foreign". Kukiz'15 is calling for a referendum on the refugee quotas that the EC proposed to introduce in 2015. The main aim of the paper is to analyse who is contesting the idea of redistribution of refugees around all member states of the EU and why, as well as criticising the proposal of a common migration policy. After analysing the party documents and rhetoric of the leaders (during the period from March 2015 to October 2017), I argue that the rhetoric is demonstrating many stereotypes and stigmatisations that are used in the political discourse and political agenda, but also simplifications and fears that very often go deeper. Most visible are identity-based arguments, including the one claiming that if refugees are to be accepted they need to be "like us". Security and economic fears are also visible, and used by the mentioned parties in order to consolidate the electorate and gain political capital.

The migration crisis – the view from Poland

Despite the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, which was supposed to facilitate the establishment of the EU migration policy, member states are yet to come to an agreement. The refugee crisis, the apogee of which came in 2015, meant that the debates on the need for and shape of this joint policy returned with redoubled force. Owing to the Brexit negotiations, of great importance to all member states, as well as the signing of the EU-Turkey refugee deal and the relatively smaller number of refugees arriving in Europe, this topic has become much less frequent in the public discourse. Yet the problem has not gone away – such states as Italy, which struggle to cope with the largest number of arrivals on account of their location, are continuing to appeal for constructive solutions at EU level as well as the support of other member states. A response to these appeals was supposed to come in the form of the refugee relocation system, which assumes that each European Union member state will accept a specific number of refugees. This number was to be calculated on the basis of a given country's wealth and population. Yet this solution was criticised in several member states – especially the Visegrad Group and Austria. In May 2016, the European Commission (EC) announced financial penalties for those countries that fail to meet their designated quota of refugees. The Polish government consistently refuses to satisfy this requirement, and criticises the relocation programme.

The issue of accepting refugees became the subject of heated political debate in Poland in 2015, particularly between the parties Law and Justice (PiS) and Civic Platform (PO). During its time in government until 2015, PO initially rejected the possibility of accepting refugees, before agreeing to Poland's admitting around

7,000 relocated individuals.² The PiS government rescinded this decision after coming to power in October 2015, citing security issues and Poland's engagement in helping refugees from war-affected areas in Ukraine. They made it clear that, especially after the terrorist attacks in Brussels and Paris, Poland was unable to accept any refugees who might represent a danger to citizens' safety.

Poland was not the only country that did not agree to the quotas set by the EC, consistently refusing to accept even the smallest number of refugees. In light of this refusal, in December 2017 the EC decided to refer Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to the European Court of Justice.

The migration crisis has been the subject of debates in the Polish parliament, including, notably, two important speeches on 16 September 2015, by Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz and PiS leader Jarosław Kaczyński. These addresses resonated in the media, with the arguments the two leaders invoked, such as fear of the Islamisation of Europe, becoming a permanent fixture in the public discourse. In October 2016, the Polish parliament's European Affairs Committee proposed a resolution concerning compulsory relocation of refugees. According to this resolution, the European Parliament and EU Council decree on the mechanism of mandatory relocation of refugees does not comply with the principle of subsidiarity described in Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union.³ This resolution reflects the dominant mood in Polish society, the vast majority of which does not support the idea of accepting refugees – according to a public opinion poll carried out in December 2017 by CBOS, 63% of respondents do not agree to Poland accepting refugees from countries where military conflicts are taking place, 33% are of the opposite view, and 4% do not have an opinion.⁴

Poland's refusal to accept refugees has been widely discussed not only within EU institutions, but also in domestic and international media. A common question has been why a state whose citizens have often been forced into emigration (during communism, for example), but also who emigrate en masse in search of better living and working conditions, dissociates itself so unequivocally from the idea of showing solidarity in sharing a problem faced by certain member states. The aversion to refugees is often explained by fears over their cultural and religious differences. Interestingly, there has been hardly any mention in the discussion of the issues resulting from the direct experience Poland had in the 1990s when admitting several tens of thousands of Chechens. As Muslims, these refugees might also have been perceived as a threat to Polish identity, yet this argument also failed to appear

² Refugees in Poland, facts and myths, URL: <https://www.premier.gov.pl/wydarzenia/aktualnosci/uchodzczy-w-polsce-fakty-i-mity.html> (accessed 8 December 2017).

³ The Sejm committee against the mechanism of mandatory relocation of refugees, URL: <http://www.parlamentarny.pl/wydarzenia/sejmowa-komisja-przeciw-mechanizmowi-przymusowej-relokacji-uchodzcow,16007.html> (accessed 8 December 2017).

⁴ CBOS, *Stosunek do przyjmowania uchodźców* ("Attitude towards accepting refugees"), no. 163/2017.

in the Polish public debate of the time. The refugee question appears to have become politicised, and is used, albeit in different ways, by all political factions. The political discourse is divided into camps – those who call upon Poland to carry out its duties resulting from solidarity with other EU member states, but also its Christian duty, and those who refuse to accept refugees, citing the need to defend the Christian Polish identity from the influx of Islam.

The Polish populist radical right

Defining a party of the populist radical right causes a number of problems, mostly because the very concept of populism is broad and vague, and can be used by differing ideological groups. Researchers point to the characteristics of populism, which claims the right to represent “the people”, contrasting it usually with the corrupt elites,⁵ thus creating two antagonistic groups within society. Ivan Krastev, meanwhile, explains that “the priority given to building capitalism over building democracy is at the heart of the current rise of democratic illiberalism in Central and Eastern Europe”.⁶ In part, Polish populism, as in other countries of the region, is characterised not by right-wing or left-wing rhetoric, but nationalist discourse, proclaiming the need to revisit the period of transformation.⁷ At the same time, most researchers agree that populist rhetoric appeals to citizens’ fears and frustrations, exploiting their unfamiliarity with how the mechanisms of politics function. For the purposes of this article, I will use Cas Mudde’s definition of the populist radical right, which stresses that for populists, politics should express the *volonté générale* – the will of the people as the supreme value.⁸

In analysing the radical right, it is important to emphasise the characteristics that distinguish it from the extreme right. Above all, the radical right criticises the existing democratic system; it is not anti-system as such, though, as it operates within the system and accepts its rules. Radical-right parties are usually anti-European and oppose the trends of modernisation. According to Roger Griffin, the radical right is also characterised by aversion to individualism, as well as to upholding human rights (and especially minority rights).⁹ Mudde underlines that the radical right is characterised by nationalism and xenophobia, and also places an

⁵ Andreas Schelder, “Anti-Political Establishment Parties”, *Party Politics*, 2/3(1996); Margaret Canovan, “Trust the people! Populism and the two faces of democracy”, *Political Studies*, 47,1 (1999) also in Paul Taggart, *Populism*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000.

⁶ Ivan Krastev, “The strange death of the liberal consensus”, *Journal of Democracy*, 18,4 (2007).

⁷ Radosław Markowski, “Populizm a demokracja: ujęcia, dylematy, kontrowersje”, in Radosław Markowski (ed.) *Populizm a demokracja*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo ISP PĀN, 2004, 23–24.

⁸ Cas Mudde, *Populist Radical Parties in Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, 23

⁹ Roger Griffin, “Afterword: last rights?”, in Sabrina P. Ramet (ed.), *The Radical Right in Central and Eastern Europe since 1989*, University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999.

emphasis on law and order, in order to construct a monocultural state.¹⁰ It is noteworthy that in ethnically homogeneous countries such as Poland, where ethnic divides are practically invisible, right-wing parties rally against the enemy in the form of incomers – immigrants, people of a different religion or value system. Lenka Bustikova notes that, paradoxically, the mobilisation of the radical right in Eastern Europe against refugees “westernized the eastern European radical right in the opposition to Islam and migrants”.¹¹ The tendency of mainstream parties (such as PiS and Fidesz in Hungary) to adopt some of the demands of radical-right groupings also causes problems with the classification of parties of the radical right.¹² The populist radical right is therefore a complex concept that is hard to define. Mudde points out that the radical right is a form of nationalism, yet whereas all radical-right parties are nationalist, not all nationalists are part of the radical right.¹³ Similarly, not every radical-right party is populist. In this article, I am only interested in the relevant parties of the radical populist right currently active on the Polish political scene – the Kukiz’15 movement, which invited activists from the National Movement to be on its lists, and the Congress of the New Right, present in the European Parliament (as well as the splinter party KORWiN/Liberty).

Table 1: Polish elections 2014-2015

Political party	2014 European parliament elections	2015 Parliamentary elections
Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska)	32.13%	24.09 %
Polish Peasant Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe)	6.8%	5.13 %
Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość)	31.78%	37.58 %
Democratic Left Alliance – Labour Union (Sojusz Lewicy Demo- kratycznej – Unia Pracy)	9.44%	-
Kukiz’15	-	8.81 %

¹⁰ Cas Mudde, *The Ideology of the Extreme Right*, Manchester–New York: Manchester University Press, 2000, 177

¹¹ Lenka Bustikova, “The Radical Right in Eastern Europe”, in: Jens Rydgren (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.

¹² Cas Mudde, *The Study of Populist Radical Right Parties: Towards a Fourth Wave*, C-Rex working paper series, 1(2016), University of Oslo.

¹³ Cas Mudde, *The Ideology of the Extreme Right*, op. cit., 30.

Congress of the New Right (Kongres Nowej Prawicy)	7.15%	-
Modern (Nowoczesna)	-	7.60%

Source: National Electoral Commission www.pkw.gov.pl

Congress of the New Right and KORWiN-Liberty

The party founded by Janusz Korwin-Mikke in 2010 is the continuation of his political activities stretching back to the beginning of the democratic transformation in Poland. The founders of the Congress of the New Right were activists of the party Liberty and Lawfulness (*Wolność i Praworządność*), as well as politicians of the Real Politics Union (*Unia Polityki Realnej*). The party is conservative-liberal and Euro-hostile, advocating the abolition of the European Union. The Congress of the New Right (*Kongres Nowej Prawicy*) programme declares that it is the “only consistently and uncompromisingly anti-EU party in Poland”.¹⁴ In economic issues, the party calls for far-reaching liberalism, declaring a market free from any intervention as a foundation of economic progress. In ideological questions, the KNP is a conservative party that stresses the Latin roots of European civilisation, and criticises civil partnerships, abortion and IVF, as well as the policy of multiculturalism. Until 2015, the face of the party was its leader, Janusz Korwin-Mikke, and its rhetoric is viewed as controversial, containing xenophobic and anti-Semitic elements and with a view of history based on conspiracy theories.

The party electorate comprises mostly young people, generally residents of large cities, 75% of them men.¹⁵ The Congress employed new media to conduct an effective campaign targeted particularly at young voters. In the European Parliament elections in 2014, it achieved a result of 7.15%, taking fourth place and winning four seats. Notably, the party’s result among Poles voting abroad was considerably better than at home. In Ireland, it gained some 39.36% of valid votes, in the United Kingdom 37%, and in Iceland 30.25%.¹⁶ Some analysts have argued that the KNP electorate is made up of so-called protest votes which the party managed to mobilise in 2014. Neither the party, nor its former leader in presidential elections, has yet been able to win a significant number of votes. In 2015 Korwin-Mikke, the party founder and its most recognisable and active politician, founded a new party named KORWiN (an acronym of his name meaning Coalition for the Renewal of the Republic Liberty and Hope). It did not win any seats in the Polish

¹⁴ Programme of the Congress of the New Right (2014).

¹⁵ Adrian Koladka, “KW Kongres Nowej Prawicy”, in Michał Dulak (ed.), *Wybory do Parlamentu Europejskiego w Polsce 2014*, Kraków 2014, 72.

¹⁶ Electoral results, National Election Commission, URL: <http://pe2014.pkw.gov.pl/pl/wyniki/gminy/view/149901> (accessed 6 December 2017).

parliament, but retains two MEPs (one a member of the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy group, and the other unattached) elected from the KNP list, as well as one member of the lower house of the Polish parliament, the Sejm (elected from the Kukiz'15 list). In 2016, the KORWiN party changed its name to Liberty (*Wolność*), but the party structure and programme remain unchanged.

Kukiz'15

In formal terms, the Kukiz'15 movement is a parliamentary group in the eighth term of the Sejm, as well as an association constituting the structure of the movement established by the musician Paweł Kukiz for the parliamentary elections in 2015. The movement included members of the nationalistic National Movement and the All-Polish Youth, also a nationalist organisation invoking the tradition of a similar organisation operating in the inter-war period. In the 2015 presidential election, Kukiz received 20.8% of votes, putting him in third place.¹⁷ Owing to the ideological diversity of its members, the movement is characterised by an eclectic programme, in which the major points include the creation of single-member constituencies, refusal to accept even the smallest number of refugees from Syria and other countries affected by war, and criticism of EU bureaucracy, as well as a proposal to deregulate European law. At present, Kukiz'15 has 30 seats in the 460-strong Sejm.

In 2016, the Kukiz movement set up the website dzienreferendalny.pl ("referendum day"), to promote the idea of a referendum on Poland's acceptance of refugees. This idea stemmed from the belief that, as stated on the website, "The host in Poland at present is no other power, but the citizens. It is the citizens who should decide whether we allow anyone into our Homeland, and whom".¹⁸ Alongside the form for collecting signatures, the website also features a poll asking: "Are you in favour of Poland accepting refugees as part of the system of relocation in the European Union". In Poland, the Sejm can decide to put a particular issue to referendum based on the initiative of citizens gaining the backing of at least 500,000 people. Despite the involvement of various organisations in the collection of signatures (including fans of football clubs), as yet the minimum number has not been reached.

¹⁷ Presidential Election results 2015, National Election Commission, URL: http://prezydent2015.pkw.gov.pl/319_Pierwsze_glosowanie (accessed 7 December 2017).

¹⁸ Referendum Day webpage, URL: <http://dzienreferendalny.pl> (accessed 6 December 2017).

“Refugees not welcome” – the rhetoric of the Polish populist radical right

The system of relocation of refugees and proposals for EU-wide solutions to the migration crisis are contested at various levels – the most commonly raised issue is the threat to identity posed by incomers, and their associated religious and cultural differences, but economic issues and security are also important.

The first rhetorical device used by politicians of the radical right concerns vocabulary – in their speeches they seldom use the word “refugee”, replacing it with “immigrant”, “Islamic immigrant” or “economic migrant”. Their objective is to focus attention on the economic aspect of migration, and away from the question of war and political, ethnic and religious persecution. By highlighting economic aspects, they depict the European Union as a source of profits, and people trying to reach it are attributed with solely economic migrations. Robert Winnicki, leader of the National Movement, calls refugees “invaders”,¹⁹ arguing that refugees registered in Greece, for example, upon moving to another EU member state become merely economic migrants. It is worth mentioning that referring to new arrivals as false refugees took place in other European countries in the early 1990s with the inflow of immigrants from the East, when the idea of “undeserving asylum-seekers” portrayed as “disguised economic migrants” appeared in the public discourse of the countries of the so-called old EU.²⁰

Analysis of the position of parties of the populist radical right reveals a host of references to economic issues. The politicians of these parties argue that Poland cannot afford to accept people arriving from the Middle East or Africa, and that the help offered by the European Union is minimal, sufficing for no more than a few months’ stay.²¹ The economic motives of refugees leaving, for example, Lebanon and Turkey for EU states is also stressed; according to Kukiz’15, such individuals should be treated as economic immigrants.²² Janusz Korwin-Mikke’s stance is that refugees heading to Europe are attracted only by benefits: “if we were to abolish benefits, there wouldn’t be any people coming to Poland and the whole of Europe”.²³ Korwin-Mikke also repeated his argument during a debate in the European Parliament on the European migration programme, emphasising that those

¹⁹ “Manifestacja ‘Przeciw islamizacji Europy’”. Winnicki: “To nie uchodźcy, to najezdźcy”, *Polska The Times Warszawa*, 7 February 2016, URL: <http://www.polskatimes.pl/artukul/9371803,warszawa-manifestacja-przeciw-islamizacji-europy-winnicki-to-nie-uchodzcy-to-najezdzy-zdjecia,id,t.html> (accessed 14 December 2017).

²⁰ Robin Cohen, *Migration and its Enemies: Global Capital, Migrant Labour and the Nation-State*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006, 88.

²¹ Position of the Kukiz’15 movement on “refugees”, published on the Facebook page of Pawel Kukiz, 16 September 2015, URL: <https://www.facebook.com/kukizpawel/posts/958933797507674> (accessed 15 December 2017).

²² Ibidem.

²³ Janusz Korwin-Mikke, speech in the European Parliament, 8 September 2015, URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7CQkivQNQI> (accessed 8 December 2017).

coming to Europe do not want to work, and that by offering high benefits, the EU does not give them an incentive to do so.²⁴

Security issues crop up frequently in the public debate, although usually in combination with cultural issues. Islam is seen as a threat not only to identity, but also to Poles' immediate security. During a debate in the Sejm, Robert Winnicki from the National Movement demanded "zero immigrants, zero refugees, zero terrorists in the Polish state".²⁵ Equating refugees with terrorists has become a permanent feature of the radical right's rhetoric. In Kukiz'15's declaration, we can read that "among immigrants, for example in Hungary, Islamic State militants have already been identified. There will be more and more of them, because they make it clear that their next objective is an 'assault' of terrorists on Europe. Europe has immersed itself in chaos and ethnic and religious conflicts".²⁶ Media reports on the New Year's Eve attacks on women in certain cities in Germany also reverberated in Poland, with female MPs from Kukiz'15 and KORWiN writing a letter to Prime Minister Beata Szydło on 14 January 2016 stating that "the increase in the number of Islamic immigrants is linked to cases of harassment, attacks and rapes of women, which we shall not accept, we will not allow the safety of Polish women to be any kind of bargaining chip".²⁷ In 2016 a proposal was made to build a fence between Poland and Ukraine in order to protect the eastern border.²⁸

The next, and perhaps most visible issue is that of religious- and culture-based arguments – refugees, especially Muslims or those from countries where Islam is dominant, are seen as culturally different and unacceptable. Before the Second World War, Poland was a multicultural country populated by Poles, Jews, Germans, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Armenians, Tatars and Lemkos, among others. Following the border shifts, the Holocaust and mass population transfers, Poland became one of the most ethnically homogeneous countries in Europe – today, 94% of inhabitants see themselves as "ethnic Poles"²⁹ and 93% declare themselves

²⁴ Janusz Korwin-Mikke, speech in the European Parliament, 7 June 2016, URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IORwEe2fWQA> (accessed 8 December 2017).

²⁵ Robert Winnicki, 15th session of the Sejm, 1 April 2016, 241.

²⁶ Position of the Kukiz'15 movement on "refugees", op. cit.

²⁷ "Działaczki Kukiz'15 i KORWiN nie chcą w Polsce ani jednego 'uchodźcy'! 'Wzrost ilości imigrantów islamskich wiąże się z przypadkami molestowania, bicia i gwałcenia'", *wPolityce.pl*, 14 January 2016, URL: <https://wpolityce.pl/polityka/278176-dzialaczki-kukiz15-i-korwin-nie-chca-w-polsce-ani-jednego-uchodzcy-wzrost-ilosci-imigrantow-islamskich-wiaze-sie-z-przypadkami-molestowania-bicia-i-gwalcenia> (accessed 10 December 2017)

²⁸ "Ruch Narodowy chce ogrodzenia na granicy polsko-ukraińskiej", *Parlamentarny.pl*, 25 February 2016, URL: <http://www.parlamentarny.pl/wydarzenia/ruch-narodowy-chce-ogrodzenia-na-granicy-polsko-ukrainskiej,6077.html> (accessed 12 December 2017).

²⁹ *Wyniki Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego Ludności i Mieszkań 2011*, Warsaw, March 2012, URL: https://stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/lu_nps2011_wyniki_nsp2011_22032012.pdf (accessed 12 December 2017).

to be Catholics.³⁰ For the radical right, this ethnic, cultural and religious uniformity of Poland is a virtue and a wealth that must be defended.³¹ Owing to this ethnic uniformity, as well as the country's isolation during the years of communism, foreigners in Poland, especially those representing different cultures, are treated with reserve, and often also fear. The discourse based upon insisting on Catholicism as an intrinsic attribute of Polishness is also affected by the myth of Poland as *Antemurale Christianitatis* – the bulwark of Christendom – and Poland's role in defending Christian Europe from Eastern influence.³² The idea of Poland being the only country in the European Union to be founded on Christian values often appears in the statements of radical-right politicians. They regard Catholicism as the essence of Polishness and the foundation of Polish national identity, and hence in need of protection. This was what led the National Movement to stress during a plenary debate in the Sejm that “we want Poland to stay Christian (...) we don't want the errors of multiculturalism Western Europe is making, and of which it is experiencing the tragic consequences”.³³ During another debate, Kukiz'15 MP Anna-Maria Siarkowska said that Poles are “a hospitable nation, but don't want culturally alien representatives of the civilisation of Islam, a civilisation that doesn't assimilate, but imposes its way of life and thinking on others – it imposes its religion and its laws”.³⁴

The question of religion appears very frequently in the discourse, also in the context of whom we should help – there has been a proposal to help only Christian refugees, as those with whom Poles are connected by shared values. Here too, the argument was raised pointing to the primary needs of Poles living outside of the country – in Kazakhstan, Lithuania and Belarus. The Kukiz'15 leader's declaration emphasises that in Kazakhstan, Siberia and Ukraine there are “at least several tens of thousands of Poles and the descendants of Poles waiting for repatriation. There is no need to assimilate them, they won't make terrorist attacks. And yet for 25 years we have not brought them over”.³⁵ This argument is also raised by other parties, including the ruling Law and Justice, who also point to the large number of citizens of Ukraine living in Poland as refugees from conflict-hit areas.

The debate over the solution to the problem of refugees arriving in Europe also became a forum for criticism of the institution of the European Union, which

³⁰ CBOS, *Zmiany w zakresie wiary i religijności Polaków po śmierci Jana Pawła II* (“Changes in the Belief and Religiosity of Poles since the Death of John Paul II”), Komunikat z badań BS/49/2012, Warszawa 2012.

³¹ Robert Winnicki, Posiedzenie Sejmu, 9 February 2016, URL: <https://videosejm.pl/video/4787-posel-robert-winnicki-wystapienie-z-dnia-09-lutego-2016-roku> (accessed 10 December 2017).

³² Janusz Tazbir, *Polska przedmurzem Europy*, Warszawa: Twój styl, 2004.

³³ Robert Winnicki, 15th session of the Sejm, 1 April 2016, 242.

³⁴ Anna Siarkowska's speech during Sejm session on 11 February 2016, video recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=33&v=S3nW-RWgNRw (accessed 14 December 2017).

³⁵ Position of the Kukiz'15 movement on “refugees”, op. cit.

on the one hand is seen as ineffective, yet on the other hand is accused of excessive interference in the internal affairs of member states. Most parties of the populist radical right are Eurosceptic or hostile to the European Union, and the Polish example is no exception here. Both Kukiz'15 and the Congress of the New Right (as well as KORWiN) criticised the refugee relocation mechanism, and they were also active in passing the resolution in the Sejm rejecting mandatory relocation. Sylwester Chruszcz from Kukiz'15 supported the proposed resolution, maintaining that the Polish side would not agree to "the EU diktat imposing upon us by force a limit of citizens of third countries or stateless individuals".³⁶ He added that this position was in accordance with the Polish national interest, as "we are a sovereign state which itself decides upon issues fundamental to us".³⁷ The European Union is accused of lack of action to bring an end to the conflict in the Middle East, as well as providing insufficient aid in the countries in question. A common stance is the idea, included in the Kukiz'15 declaration, that refugees (the word "immigrant" is used in the declaration) "should be helped, but in the countries from which they come", and that the EU ought to "provide active support for ending conflicts in such countries as Syria and Libya".³⁸ Kukiz believes that a "new Marshall Plan" should be proposed to the Middle East and North Africa.³⁹ Criticism of the solutions offered by the European Union has also become a motivation for collecting signatures for the initiative to hold a referendum, in which Kukiz's movement wants to ask the question: "Are you in favour of Poland accepting 'refugees' within the relocation system in the European Union?"⁴⁰ The programme of the KORWiN party,⁴¹ founded after the split within the KNP, cites as the absolute priority of Poland's foreign policy "regaining the possibility of making sovereign decisions on Poland's immigration policy",⁴² refusing to countenance the interference of the European Commission in Poland's internal affairs. The Congress, the only Polish party to advocate abolition of the European Union, announced in 2014 that it would vote against all initiatives in the European Parliament aiming to increase the competences of EU institutions, and thus against all community initiatives.⁴³ In a controversial speech in the European Parliament, Korwin-Mikke criticised the Dublin Regulation, comparing refugee camps to concentration camps and claiming

³⁶ Artur Bartkiewicz, "Sejm za uchwałą odrzucającą przymusową relokację uchodźców w UE", in *Rzeczpospolita* 21 October 2016 URL: <http://www.rp.pl/Uchodzczy/161029860-Sejm-za-uchwala-odrzucajaca-przymusowa-relokacje-uchodzcow-w-UE.html> (accessed 8 December 2017).

³⁷ Ibidem.

³⁸ Position of the Kukiz'15 movement on "refugees", op. cit.

³⁹ Ibidem.

⁴⁰ Referendum Day webpage, URL: <http://dzienreferendalny.pl> (accessed 6 December 2017).

⁴¹ The KORWiN party changed its name to Wolność (Liberty) on 8 October 2016.

⁴² *Dumna, Bogata Polska, Program Partii KORWiN Koalicja Odnowy Rzeczypospolitej Wolność i Nadzieja*, Warszawa 17 October 2015.

⁴³ Programme of the Congress of the New Right (2014).

that EU policy is one leading to “Europe being flooded with human garbage [...] that does not want to work”; this policy, he argues, will lead to the “downfall of Europe”.⁴⁴

Conclusions

Contemporary Polish identity is based on culture, language and religion, and particularly the last of these played an important role in the time when the Polish nation was subjected to external oppression (the partitions and the communist period). The Catholic Church has often been perceived as the guardian of Polish identity as well as the bastion of freedom. It is therefore no surprise that arguments about endangered identity are cited in the debate on accepting refugees or the common EU migration policy. The fear of outsiders, often representing a different religion and culture, is fomented and reinforced by the discourse of the populist radical right. As Krastev notes, this type of rhetoric “exploits and strengthens the sense of division into ‘ordinary citizens’ and the ‘elite’, which only safeguards its own interests”.⁴⁵ In these conditions, success is enjoyed by parties and their leaders who succeed in persuading society about the existence of a threat, as well as their commitment to defending ordinary citizens, their identity, way of life and well-being. Analysis of the rhetoric of radical right-wing parties in Poland leads to the conclusion that both economic arguments and those related to security have an extra agenda in the form of identity-based arguments. Activists of the radical right view ethnic and religious uniformity as a virtue. In order to be accepted, refugees should be the same as inhabitants of the country in which they are arriving. As a result, if one is to even consider accepting them, then this should only be on condition that they must be Christians. Islam is presented as “the other”, a threat for Polish and European identity, and the migration crisis is interpreted as an attempted “invasion of Europe”, an alien civilisation attempting to take control. The European Union is criticised for approaching the crisis too liberally, for its excessive openness and undue protection of its citizens, as well as for its misguided policy of multiculturalism, which, according to the radical right, results in ethnic ghettos and terrorist attacks. The Polish radical right therefore has the mission to safeguard not only Polish society from Islamisation, but also Europe. This is the subject of one of the points in the Congress of the New Right’s programme: “we believe that only restoration of European values – Latin Civilisation and Western Universalism – can change the present Europe under occupation of the EU from an area of permanent crisis into a space of freedom, well-being and the principles that once built the power of the Old Continent”.⁴⁶ The new Prime Minister of Poland, Mateusz

⁴⁴ Janusz Korwin-Mikke, speech in the European Parliament, 8 September 2015, URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7CQkivQNQI> (accessed 8 December 2017).

⁴⁵ Ivan Krastev, “The strange death”, *op. cit.* p. 60.

⁴⁶ Programme of the Congress of the New Right (2014).

Morawiecki, has also joined this rhetoric, speaking of the need for the re-Christianisation of Europe.⁴⁷

A characteristic of the radical right in Eastern Europe is mainstream parties' tendency to appropriate their rhetoric; this occurs in Hungary (where Fidesz adopted some of Jobbik's xenophobic rhetoric),⁴⁸ as well as in Poland, where the ruling Law and Justice party often uses exactly the same arguments against acceptance of relocation of refugees as Pawel Kukiz and Korwin-Mikke. An example might be the statement of Foreign Affairs Minister Witold Waszczykowski, who asserted that Poland could potentially accept Christian refugees, as only they would have the chance for assimilation. Commenting on the EU Justice Tribunal's decision pronouncing that the refugee relocation mechanism is a legitimately adopted EU law binding in all countries (including Poland), Waszczykowski stated that it is not refugees who are in question, but economic immigrants.

The rhetoric of the radical right, through the simplicity and clarity of its message and with the help of the (especially social) media, reaches a broad range of recipients and influences their perception of the migration crisis and solutions proposed by the European Union. This rhetoric influences not only the radicalisation of the language of politics, but also attitudes in society, leading to acts of physical violence.⁴⁹ This causes profound social division in Poland, but the question also divides European societies and has an impact on EU unity. In 2016, Ivan Krastev said of the divisions that opened up in the EU before the recent crises: "the financial crisis split the EU into creditors and debtors, tearing open a divide between north and south. Now the refugee crisis is dividing Europe between East and West [...] We are not just experiencing a lack of solidarity [...] we are experiencing the clash of conflicting solidarities: between national, ethnic and religious solidarity and our duty as human beings".⁵⁰ It seems that it will not be easy to head off the crisis over the failure to secure acceptance for the decision to relocate some refugees, especially after the European Commission's decision in 2017 to refer Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to the European Court of Justice.

⁴⁷ Mateusz Morawiecki, interview for TV Trwam, 8 December 2017, URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ng4nkvx6Yy4> (accessed 14 December 2017).

⁴⁸ Lenka Bustikova, "The Radical Right", op. cit.

⁴⁹ According to a report on the OKO.press website, in Poland in 2016 record numbers of hate crimes were recorded, meaning those motivated by supposed religion, nationality, sexual orientation or skin colour. URL: <https://oko.press/waszczykowski-powtarza-przekaz-pis-uchodzcy-czyli-migranci-czyli-terror-a-przeciez-przyjmujemy-ukraincow/> (accessed 8 December 2017).

⁵⁰ "Refugee crisis: 'Not the same values in East and West'", *Die Welt*, 8 March 2016, URL: <http://www.dw.com/en/refugee-crisis-not-the-same-values-in-east-and-west/a-19102868> (accessed 8 December 2017).

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